

What IMA Members Think of JIMA

The Results of the 1991 Survey

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The members of the Islamic Medical Association of North America are extremely varied in terms of their medical specialty, country of origin, and philosophical views. Because of this, JIMA, which is the official journal of the organization, has a complex and varied mission. This mission includes the publication of new research, educational articles, and manuscripts which deal with health issues related to Islam. This is a unique mission among the thousands of medical journals. How well is JIMA perceived?

Earlier this year, a questionnaire was sent to each IMA member to evaluate JIMA*. One hundred twenty-one† responses were received representing 25% of the membership. Most of the respondents (117) were from the United States and most (117) were physicians. Eleven percent of the respondents claim to read the journal "cover to cover" while 65% "read a few articles in each issue." Sixty-seven percent of respondents felt that the quality of both the medical and the Islamic articles was "good." The remainder of the respondents were divided between "excellent" and "poor".

One goal for the journal has been to balance the number of medical articles and those dealing with Islamic topics. Fifty-seven percent of respondents felt that this balance was achieved. The remainder were evenly divided between those readers desiring more medical articles and those desiring more Islamic articles.

Most of the respondents do not author medical articles and therefore have not submitted manuscripts to JIMA for publication. Of those who have been authors, 90% felt that their manuscripts were handled in either an "excellent" or "good" fashion by the editorial office.

In the comments section of the survey, most members expressed the opinion that the journal was an important service to IMA members and that it was a unique journal because of its combination of Islamic and medical issues. Only seven respondents felt that the journal should be either discontinued, replaced by a newsletter, or published less frequently.

Can this information be useful in the evaluation of JIMA? Eventhough responses were received by only one-fourth of the members, they seem to constitute a representative sample of the total membership. If this is true, it appears that JIMA is fulfilling its mission. The quality of the manuscripts is good. The editorial

balance is appropriate. The handling of manuscripts is satisfactory. The membership decided that JIMA should continue to be published.

With this endorsement, we, the editors, commit ourselves to continue to assume this responsibility, and with Allāh's guidance and help we will continue to strive to improve the journal, Inshāllāh. The members have to commit themselves too. The single most important step would be to increase the number of manuscripts that are submitted. In the end, a journal can be no better than its authors. For those who are inexperienced in medical publishing, the editorial staff has in the past, and will continue to work hard to assist those prospective authors with manuscript improvement. Case reports, editorials, letters to the editor, and clinical reviews are all types of manuscripts which are appropriate for first time authors. We encourage IMA's "silent majority" to use JIMA as a vehicle to share their interesting cases and important ideas.

As editors, we have spent many hours wondering what the readership thought. We are pleased to know that you feel that we are doing a good job. With your help, we-Inshā'allāh-can do even better. Wassalām.

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*The results of the survey were collated and presented at the business meeting of the Annual Convention on July 29, 1991 at Uniondale, NY.

†Since the tabulation of the data on June 30th, an additional 12 responses were received.